

6. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITETAILED SEA EAGLE *HALIAEETUS ALBICILLA* (LINNAEUS) AT CHILKA LAKE

We recently spent a couple of days bird watching at Chilka lake in Orissa (23rd to 25th February 1979).

While driving upto Barkul Point from Ramba Guest House, we had seen a whitetailed sea Eagle on 24th February near the Naval Establishment junction.

The visibility was near perfect and the bird was seen flying to our left against greenish mountainous background at a height of about 300 m. The prominent white and short tail

and the broad wings matched perfectly with the description given in the HANDBOOK (Volume 1 : 286).

Again on 25th February one of us (KSRK) had a very clear sight record of the bird near Barkul point; perhaps the same single individual which we had seen the day before.

The HANDBOOK mentions only a single record in India from Punjab.¹ Our sighting confirms the occurrence of this bird in Orissa also.

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K. S. R. KRISHNA RAJU

VICE-CHANCELLOR,
ANDHRA UNIVERSITY, WALTAIR,
VISAKHAPATNAM-530 003,

M. R. APPARAO

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¹ The distribution has been updated in the 2nd edition of the HANDBOOK (1978) as extending to Rajasthan and Kutch—EDS.

7. NIGHT HERON *NYCTICORAX NYCTICORAX* (LINNAEUS) BREEDING IN SUB-ADULT PLUMAGE

I was often intrigued by buffy white-stippled, egret-like birds on nests while watching mixed heronries around Bombay, until a full-fledged juvenile fallen off a Night Heron nest was brought to the Society by a member, and its identity confirmed by reference to specimens in the Society's collection. Since then whenever I came across such birds on nests I presumed them to be full-fledged young of the species, though invariably always they were unattended by adult plumaged birds at the time of observation. That this presumption was unfounded was proved when I saw juvenile-plumaged

Night Herons collecting sticks as nesting material in the company of adult-plumaged birds from a bare Copperpod tree on the morning of 26th August 1979 in the Borivli National Park, and commuting back and forth between the Copperpod and the nesting tree. It is evident therefore that juvenile-plumaged Night Herons found on nests in heronries need not necessarily be full-fledged chicks, but mature birds breeding in subadult plumage. There is, however, no referene to this breeding habit of the bird in published literature on Indian birds as far as I am aware.